

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 04352 291242Z

ACTION NEA-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1289

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 4352

EXDIS

MANILA FOR AMBASSADOR BYROADE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, US

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S CHARGES OF US INTERFERENCE IN PAKISTAN
POLITICS

REF: STATE 096697

1. SINCE IT PROVED IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRANGE BEFORE MONDAY AN APPOINTMENT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AZIZ AHMED TO EXPRESS OUR DEEP CONCERN ABOUT PM BHUTTO'S APRIL 28 ALLEGATIONS, CHARGE MADE DEMARCHE AT MIDDAY TODAY ON FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAHI. (AZIZ AHMED'S OFFICE REPORTED HE IS TIED UP WITH THE VISITING UAE FOREIGN MINISTER.)

2. CHARGE FOLLOWED APPROACH TAKEN IN WASHINGTON YESTERDAY WITH AMBASSADOR YAQUB BY UNDER SECRETARY HABIB. HE REITERATED THE CATEGORICAL DENIAL OF THE PM'S ALLEGATIONS WHICH HABIB HAD MADE TO YAQUB AND WHICH WE HAD ALSO MADE PUBLICLY. HE REAFFIRMED THAT ANY SUCH ALLEGED INTERFERENCE WITH THE PAKISTAN POLITICAL PROCESS WAS INCONSISTENT WITH OUR POSITION IN PAKISTAN AND THE LONG STANDING FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE HAD WITH THE GOP. RECALLING THE CONVERSATION ON THIS ISSUE BETWEEN THE PM AND AMBASSADOR BYROADE,

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 04352 291242Z

THE CHARGE SAID THAT WE HAD HOPED THAT IF SUCH IDEAS OF US INTERVENTION IN FAVOR OF THE PAKISTAN OPPOSITION WERE STILL IN THE PM'S MIND HE WOULD AIR THEM TO US PRIVATELY. HE REITERATED THAT THE US HAD HAD CLOSE AND AMICABLE TIES WITH PAKISTAN BUT WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO CONTINUE THAT RELATIONSHIP IF SUCH CHARGES CONTINUED TO BE A PART OF THE PAKISTAN APPROACH TO THE US. CHARGE HANDED OVER TO FOREIGN SECRETARY A COPY OF SECRETARY VANCE'S

LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO WHICH HAD BEEN DELIVERED TO BHUTTO EARLIER IN THE MORNING.

3. AFTER READING THE SECRETARY'S LETTER, SHAHI REPLIED TO THE CHARGE, READING FORMALLY FROM NOTES (AN UNUSUAL PROCEDURE FOR SHAHI). HE SAID THAT AS THE CHARGE HAD BEEN AWARE, BHUTTO HAD TALKED TO AMBASSADOR BYROADE ABOUT THE SUBJECT, MOST RECENTLY AT THEIR DINNER ON APRIL 18. THE PM, SHAHI SAID, HAD MADE THE DISCLOSURES TO THE AMBASSADOR BECAUSE IT HAD BEEN HIS BASIC FOREIGN POLICY THAT PAKISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH THE US SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AND STRENGTHENED. WITH THAT FUNDAMENTAL POLICY IN MIND, THE PM HAD MADE HIS WNRIL 28 PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF US INVOLVEMENT WITH CONSIDERABLE PAIN. SHAHI SAID THE PM HAD ONLY DONE SO AFTER A "FORMIDABLE MASS OF EVIDENCE" HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO HIS ATTENTION, AND SAID THAT HE HAD AGONIZED OVER DECISION. HIS PPP PARTYMEN HAD URGED ON HIM THAT THEY BE ALLOWED TO MAKE PUBLIC DISCLOSURES ABOUT THE PNA'S BACKERS, OR THAT HE DO SO HIMSELF. THE PM HAD PREFERRED TO MAKE THE DISCLOSURES HIMSELF, FEARING THAT IF THE PPP OFFICE-BEARERS DID SO IT COULD "COMPLICATE THE SITUATION BEYOND REPAIR."

4. SHAHI SAID THAT THE GOP WAS SATISFIED ON THE BASIS OF THE EVIDENCE OF US INTERVENTION. HE ADDED THAT MORE THAN ONE COUNTRY WAS INVOLVED. CHARGE INTERJECTED TO NOTE THAT IT WAS CURIOUS THAT ONLY ONE COUNTRY HAD BEEN SINGLED OUT IN THE PM'S SPEECH. SHAHI REPLIED THAT IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS LAST MONTH THE PM HAD IMPLIED THE INVOLVEMENT OF OTHERS. HE SPOKE OBSCURELY OF THE NEED TO JUDGE THE TIMING OF DISCLOSURES CAREFULLY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ISLAMA 04352 291242Z

5. SHAHI ASSURED THE CHARGE THAT THE SECRETARY'S LETTER WOULD BE GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION AND THAT THE PM WOULD REPLY TO IT IN TIME. HE REITERATED THAT IT WAS BASIC TO PAKISTAN FOREIGN POLICY THAT RELATIONS WITH THE US BE MAINTAINED AND STRENGTHENED. HE STRESSED PAKISTAN'S STRATEGIC POSITION, AND NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH PAKISTAN DID NOT HAVE THE SAME CLAIMS ON THE US AS DID OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES, THERE WAS NEVERTHELESS A PROFOUND CONVERGENCE OF INTERESTS. HE SAID THAT THESE WILL CONTINUE. SHAHI REPEATED THE PM'S STATEMENT TO A REPORTER FOLLOWING HIS SPEECH THAT HE DID NOT INTEND TO BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE US. HE SAID THE PM WANTED THE SITUATION PLACED IN PERSPECTIVE AND SAID AGAIN THAT HE HAD BEEN "DRIVEN" TO MAKE THE STATEMENT HE HAD.

6. WHEN THE CHARGE AGAIN CATEGORICALLY STATED THAT THERE WAS NO SHRED OF TRUTH IN ALLEGATIONS, SHAHI REPLIED THAT IT WAS A TRAGEDY AND PITY THAT THE TWO SIDES HAD COME TO OPPOSITE CONCLUSIONS. THE CHARGE RECALLED THAT AMBASSADOR BYROADE HAD COME AWAY FROM HIS LAST MEETING WITH THE PM SATISFIED THAT THE PM UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ALLEGATIONS HE HAD PRIVATELY AIRED WITH THE AMBASSADOR HAD NO

SUBSTANCE. CHARGE ALSO RECALLED THAT PM HAD AT THE SAME MEETING RECOGNIZED THE POSSIBILITY THAT THERE WERE THOSE WHO HAD THEIR OWN MOTIVES FOR BRINGING THESE ALLEGATIONS TO THE PM'S NOTICE. HE SAID IT WAS DISCONCERTING THAT NOW THE CHARGES SHOULD BE MADE IN PUBLIC. HE EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION THAT THE GOP DESIRED TO HAVE STRONG AND DEVELOPING RELATIONS WITH THE US. HE SAID IN CONCLUSION THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO DENY PUBLICLY THE CHARGES MADE AGAINST US, BUT WOULD HOPE THAT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES COULD BE DISCUSSED QUIETLY AND REASONABLY.
CONSTABLE

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O, MR. MACFARLANE.

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NNN

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